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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DUBLIN 000567

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [NATO](#) [KNNP](#) [MNUC](#) [PARM](#) [IAEA](#) [PHUM](#) [MARR](#)
AF, IR, EI
SUBJECT: IRISH POLITICAL DIRECTOR ON REVIEW OF U.S.-IRISH
RELATIONS, AFGHANISTAN, IRAN AND RENDITIONS

REF: A. DUBLIN 538
[1](#)B. DUBLIN 274
[1](#)C. DUBLIN 134

Classified By: Charge Robert J. Faucher; Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

Summary

[1](#)1. (C) In a wide ranging October 7 meeting, EUR/WE Office Director Pamela Spratlen reviewed foreign policy issues with Rory Montgomery, Political Director, Department of Foreign Affairs. Ireland has initiated a strategic review of relations between the U.S. and welcomes USG input. The Irish government will maintain its commitment to international efforts in Afghanistan, but will not commit additional troops to ISAF. Ireland supports UNSC Resolution 1835 on Iran and is prepared -- in concert with its partners -- to take even more decisive action to bar nuclear weapons from Iran. Montgomery reminded Spratlen that the issue of rendition flights through Ireland remains very sensitive and said that Ireland would welcome "validation of U.S. assurances" from the new administration next year. End summary.

Strategic Review of U.S.-Irish Relations

[1](#)2. (SBU) On July 17, 2008 in New York, Irish Prime Minister Brian Cowen announced that Ireland would initiate a strategic review of relations between the U.S. and Ireland, to be led by the Irish Ambassador to the U.S., Michael Collins. Montgomery noted that the purpose of the strategic review was to look beyond the Northern Ireland peace process, identify Ireland's key interests in the U.S., and determine if Ireland's resources are being best deployed in support of those interests. He said that Ambassador Collins would travel to Dublin October 23-24 for consultations on the strategic review and invited the Ambassador to meet with Collins to discuss Embassy Dublin's view of U.S.-Irish relations. (Note: A meeting has been scheduled for October 23. End note.)

No Additional Troops for Afghanistan

[1](#)3. (C) Montgomery stated that Afghanistan is a top international issue for Ireland and the EU, noting that Ireland would meet its commitments to the international effort there. (Note: Ireland currently contributes seven troops to the ISAF, has donated or pledged \$19 million for reconstruction and development, and is considering a contribution to support an expanded Afghani national army (Refs A and B). End note.) Montgomery revealed that there has been pressure brought to bear to withdraw Irish troops

from the ISAF, which the government has resisted. However, he noted that Ireland would not contribute additional troops to the ISAF, citing Ireland's deployment of troops to various peacekeeping efforts around the world, especially the current EU ESDP mission to Chad.

No Nuclear Proliferation in Iran

¶4. (C) Montgomery agreed that UNSC Resolution 1835 was important in reaffirming the commitment of the international community to nuclear nonproliferation in Iran. Characterizing UN actions on Iran as a "model of U.S.-EU cooperation," Montgomery stated that Ireland - in concert with its partners in the EU and UN - was prepared to take even more decisive action to ensure that nuclear weapons stay out of Iran.

Issue of Rendition Flights Remains Sensitive

¶5. (C) Unexpectedly, Montgomery raised continuing Irish concerns about allegations that rendition flights have passed through Irish airports (Ref C). He noted that the Irish government has come under steady criticism from its citizens, the Irish press, and even the Council of Europe for its decision to accept the USG's verbal assurances that no such flights have occurred. He reiterated that the government has stood firm in refusing to require inspection of U.S. military flights transiting Irish airports. Nonetheless, he

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underscored that the issue remains very sensitive for the Irish government and indicated that Ireland would welcome "validation of U.S. assurances" after the new U.S. administration is inaugurated.
FAUCHER